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ABSTRACT

This study addressed the issue of the changing role of the professoriate at institutions of higher learning. Three survey instruments were developed to measure major issues and trends--for undergraduate education students, for graduate education students, and for College of Education faculty at the University of Idaho--to determine if the issues identified by each of the three groups paralleled those derived from the literature. Only the undergraduate questionnaire, which was returned by 45 of the 60 students surveyed, is considered in this paper. Responses were organized into several categories: teaching responsibilities, advisement responsibilities, other roles, change trends, major strengths, and major areas for improvement. The study found that the issues of concern to this undergraduate group did not appear to parallel those articulated in the literature. While the issues covered in the literature are mostly those of governance and tenure, the concerns voiced by the undergraduates involved mainly issues such as the role of the professoriate and the student-professor relationship. Neither the literature nor the undergraduate survey respondents ranked technology as an important issue. The three survey instruments are appended. (CH)

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TAKING OWNERSHIP OF CHANGE:
Role of the Professoriate for the 21st Century

A paper presented
at the
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ABSTRACT

The role of the Professoriate, as institutions of higher learning prepare to meet the challenges of the 21st century, is in a state of transition. In an effort to address this issue, this educator has been conducting preliminary research with the College of Education faculty to ascertain the nature of this transition in an attempt to define major themes. The definition of these major themes/trends is especially significant in light of the rural nature of Idaho, the growing reliance on the use of technology to deliver services, and the newly established Western Governors Virtual University.

Introduction

This educator's interest in the "role" of the professoriate was stimulated by a two year (6 semesters) stint first as a full-time adjunct instructor and later as a visiting instructor (same rate of pay, but with benefits). My "elevation to "visiting instructor" rank was not out of any largesse on the part of the school of education that employed me, but rather as a result of their having "maxed" out my adjunct eligibility status with no other instructor of comparable experience to fill the position. In those 6 semesters, this educator taught 39 separate course sections that generated 74 semester credit hours, and served in excess of 1000 undergraduate and MAT students. There were student advisement[75 undergraduate students], and committee work duties assigned in addition to the instructional duties. Further, while not a part of the formal contract, there was the professional expectation that this instructor would work collaboratively with colleagues in the local public school district.

While this case may represent an extreme, it was by no means atypical of teaching assignments, at both the undergraduate and graduate level, for this particular school of education. During this 6 semester time frame, on average 60% of all undergraduate and graduate courses were taught by adjunct/visiting faculty on non-tenured track contracts.

While there was some pressure from the university administration to address this issue, the school of education was not in a position to correct this trend due to limited funding provided to them by the same administrators that were complaining. There was some discussion of increasing the use of technology to assist in course delivery, but no satisfactory plan had been fully implemented by the time that this educator resigned. It appeared that increasing technology was also hampered by the insufficient $$$ resource issue.

These experiences, and daily interaction with tenured and non-tenured colleagues, led this educator to begin to examine possible significant issues and associated trends that may concern the "changing" role of the professoriate in the closing years of the 1990's and into the 21st century. My formal research is only in the beginning stages and any conclusions presented in this paper should be viewed as tentative. Further, this paper and its associated research is a "work-in-progress" and not a definitive study at this time.

Review of Literature

The review of literature was a scan of existing articles that addressed the role of the professoriate and potential change trends to this role found in approximately the last two years of Academe and The Chronicle of Higher Education. Because this paper reflects only a preliminary examination of the issues impacting the "role" of the professoriate, this researcher made no attempt to do a detailed comprehensive literature review as would be appropriate to a dissertation. The issues and trends mentioned in the **Conclusions** section of this paper represent a cross-section of the articles reviewed.

Research Methodology

In an attempt to validate the issues and trends that appear in the literature, this researcher developed and administered three survey instruments (undergraduate education student[Appendix A], graduate education student[Appendix B], and College of Education faculty[Appendix C]) to determine if these groups had common ground with the issues and

trends found in the literature. The size of the sample was: approximately 60 undergraduate students, 20 graduate students, and 25 full-time faculty. Only the undergraduate surveys have been returned in sufficient quantity to enable this researcher to list some issues and draw some preliminary conclusions. Again the reader is reminded that this paper is a "work-in-progress".

Conclusions from the Literature

In random order these are the **Issues** and **Trends** representative of the articles scanned:

- growth of part-time positions[Hayward History Department 14% in 1991, 42% in 1995]; [33% of all Hayward students have part-time faculty for instructors]
- growth of non-tenured positions[lose of collegiality, acceptance,shared decision making, dialogue, shared history/traditions]-[22.7% of male faculty and 36.4% of female faculty are in non-tenured track positions]
- issue of disposable faculties
- continual broad-based assaults on tenure[inside and outside the institutions]
- post-tenure "review"
- productivity[teaching v. research, etc.]
- control of the curriculum[curriculum design, syllabus development, textbook selection, grading]
- rise of "professional" deans and presidents as well as other college/university administrators
- marked increase of academic legal experts
- marked increase in the use of outside consultants to legitimize what the administration and regents want to do
- increased calls by administrators and regents to faculties to be "more flexible and cooperative"
- calls for faculties to embrace "management objectives" over academic freedom
- increasingly strident calls for faculties to step down from their important role in shared college/university governance-professional administrators "know best"
- dynamic tension between a faculty's academic freedom and the "consumers' needs"
- issue of "diminishing" $$$ [Reality or Trojan Horse?]
- overall issue of power and control-those who control the "gold" make the rules

Conclusions from the Undergraduate Survey

In random order these are the **Issues** identified most frequently by the undergraduate students who have returned the survey as of April 15, 1997[N=45]

Teaching Responsibilities

- present subject matter broad

- focus on individual needs
- allow for questions
- active listener-accept divergent points-of-view
- explain in detail
- prepare for the future-not the past
- inspire-build passion in the subject-motivate
- provide for learning style differences
- be available
- be approachable
- know required subject matter
- be prepared
- be punctual
- trust students
- be willing to learn from students
- evaluate student progress in a meaningful way
- share of your past experiences
- stimulate, encourage, and demonstrate
- be a good appropriate role model
- be flexible
- challenge students so they are prepared for the upper division courses
- do not give away grades-not everyone deserves a degree
- provide for instruction using the newest of methods and technologies
- provide for hands-on learning

- **Advisement Responsibilities:**
- be honest
- be helpful
- know the student as an individual and his/her needs
- provide realistic alternatives
- know what is required for specific programs and degrees
- be an active listener
- know student's goals
- be knowledgeable of course schedules
- provide meaningful input on program/degree decisions
- be a resource
- communicate clearly

- be a guide-assist in preparing the student for graduate school or the world of work
- be non-judgmental
- know "exactly" what the student is interested in and what they need to do to get there
- be available for private discussions-help with social problems
- assist with internships, job placements

Other Roles:

- be helpful
- be a person
- provide options
- provide encouragement
- be a friend
- advisors should contact students not vise-a-versa
- be a mentor, coach, guide
- answer questions
- be available
- provide feedback
- be sympathetic
- have good multi-cultural knowledge
- suggest alternatives to achieving personal/professional goals
- open door at all times
- provide students with personal lenses to the larger world
- help with internship, etc.
- provide for additional learning opportunities outside the formal course work if the student requests

Change Trends

- fewer professors
- increased graduate student instructors-hands-on instruction/learning
- more technology
- less content more process
- more student guided learning
- focus on learning not grades
- diminished role of teaching for professors
- increased numbers of part-time students

- no changes needed
- more knowledgeable about the skills needed to be successful in the future
- attention to individual needs and learning style of students
- increased understanding of students' private-life issues
- less sexual/gender stereotyping
- more into "real life" situations
- more aware of and understanding of the global community and multi-cultural issues
- professors becoming more distant-too busy to help
- increased expectations
- increased sensitivity to learning disabilities of students
- technology to improve learning not as a means for a university to "save" money
- loss of the personal interaction[student-professor]
- increased encouragement of critical thinking and free thought

Major Strengths

- kind
- helpful
- encouraging preparedness for the future
- enthusiasm
- love of students
- willingness to listen
- ability to laugh
- love of knowledge
- knowledgeable in subject matter
- fun
- open minded
- understanding
- concerned
- friendly, approachable
- provides the extra learning aids
- available to students on their schedule-anytime
- supportive-academically and socially
- flexible
- uses examples/experiences from real personal life
- teaches to meet the needs of the different learning styles
- challenges student abilities

- grounded-a real person

Major Areas for Improvement

- lack of flexibility
- poor English language abilities
- hostile towards students
- not caring-brushing off of students
- self-centered, selfish of students' life priorities
- not applying course materials to the real world
- absentmindedness
- do not teach to the different learning styles
- not enough time to meet all of the demands
- lack of understanding
- too strict
- intimidating
- not encouraging
- research over teaching
- graduate students as instructors when they are trying to be students themselves-creates conflicts
- not listening to individual needs
- unprepared
- rigid-old fashion
- off-time office hours
- just plain not being available
- not being personable
- judgmental of personal student ideas
- too knowledgeable for 100 level courses
- unorganized
- uncaring-apathy for students concerns/needs
- not trusting of graduate student instructors' abilities to teach and their subject matter knowledge base
- research v. teaching
- rushed
- too high expectations
- frequently do not "check for understanding" before introducing new materials
- lack of teaching ability
- callous-negative

- negative
- rude to students-"put-downs"
- refusal or inability to involve students meaningfully in the learning process

Summary of Conclusions (Literature and Surveys)

At this point in the study, without returned surveys from graduate students and faculty, a comparison of the issues and trends in the literature to the issues and trends articulated by 45 undergraduate education students appears at first analysis to document a significant disconnect between what is seemly important to faculty as opposed to what is seemly important to undergraduate students.

The professoriate speaking through the articles appears most concerned with issues of governance and tenure, while being increasingly concerned about the growing power of the university bureaucracy and the resultant increase in two-tiered faculty arrangements that threaten the full-time faculty. Except as a brief footnote, as to who will have control over course content, etc., these authors are remarkably silent on how these trends may effect and affect the students of their institutions. This researcher's initial conclusion, based on the literature, seems to indicate a serious reluctance to affect meaningful change in the role of the professoriate for the 21st century or at best a professoriate acting as a reluctant change agent.

Increased use of technology does not even rate a mention in the articles scanned to date.

While on the other hand, undergraduate students appear to be quite clear about their expectations for the role of the professoriate. Their ideal professor would be open, honest, an active listener, caring, available at all times for professional and personal issues, knowledgeable of subject matter, able to teach to all learning styles, challenging but not harsh, real world grounded/practical, technologically accomplished, and willing to have students as equal partners in the learning process. The undergraduate student surveys indicate some awareness that professors may become less accessible, and that technology will become a more important means of delivering course material, but there was no support for a "virtual university" articulated. In fact, there appears to be a strong desire to have meaningful face-to-face relationships with professors as a valued part of the undergraduate experience. Undergraduates, based on the returned surveys, appear to desire student-professor relationships operating heavily in the affective domain, as opposed to cognitive domain dominated student-professor relationships.

If these undergraduate survey results, to-date, are accurate, and can be validated across a large sample, can these identified differences be turned to advantages for all involved? This researcher believes that the college/university communities can solve these issues to the mutual benefit of all parties provided a truly open, frank, and honest conversation is entered into with a "win-win" operational philosophy that values active listening and honors divergent points-of-view. If the "win-lose" diatribe continues, this researcher believes, that only losers will emerge as we move into the 21st century. Let us not follow that negative path but, rather work to improve the total quality of higher education in the next century .

Appendix A

EDAD 524-Historical and Philosophical Foundations of Higher Education

The Professoriate

(Survey Instrument-Undergraduate Student)

Female___Male___(Check One)
University_____College or Major Department_____
Graduation Date (Anticipated)_____Degree(s)_____
Years to complete degree_____
Directions: Reflect upon either your past and/or present experiences as an undergraduate student when answering the following questions. The **Comment Section** is for you to provide this researcher any pertinent data that you believe would aid this research study in better defining the **Professoriate** past, present, and emerging.

Thank you for your reflective responses.

1. What are the teaching responsibilities of an undergraduate professor?

1.1.

1.2.

1.3.

1.4.

1.5.

---

2. What are the advisement responsibilities of an undergraduate professor?

1.1.

1.2.

1.3.

1.4.

1.5.

---

3. What other roles should an undergraduate professor take to assist undergraduate students progress towards their degrees?

3.1.

3.2.

3.3.

3.4.

3.5.

---

4. How do you see the role of the undergraduate professor changing in the 1990's and as we enter the 21st century?

4.1.

4.2.

4.3.

4.4.

4.5.

---

5. What major strengths did you/do you identify in your undergraduate professors (be specific-use concrete examples)? Do Not Name A SPECIFIC PROFESSOR(S).

5.1.

5.2.

5.3.

5.4.

5.5.

---

6. What major weaknesses did you/do you identify in your undergraduate professors (be specific-use concrete examples)? DO NOT NAME A SPECIFIC PROFESSOR(S).

6.1.

6.2.

6.3.

6.4.

6.5.

Appendix B

EDAD 524-Historical and Philosophical Foundations of Higher Education

The Professoriate

(Survey Instrument-Graduate Student)

Female___Male___
School/Department_____ Year in Graduate School___
College/University_____ Degree Program(s)_____
Degree Awarded_____Major_____Cognate_____
Date of Graduation(anticipated)_____Years to complete degree(s)___
Directions: Reflect upon either your past and/or present experiences as an graduate student when answering the following questions. The **Comment Section** is for you to provide this researcher any pertinent data that you believe would aid this research study in better defining the **Professoriate** past, present, and emerging. Thank you for your reflective responses.

_____

1. What are the teaching responsibilities of a graduate professor?

1.1.

1.2.

1.3.

1.4.

1.5.

---

2. What are the advisement responsibilities of a graduate professor?

2.1.

2.2.

2.3.

2.4.

2.5.

---

3. What other roles should a graduate professor take to assist graduate students progress towards their degrees?

3.1.

3.2.

3.3.

3.4.

3.5.

---

4. How do you see the role of the graduate professor changing in the 1990's and as we enter the 21st century?

4.1.

4.2.

4.3.

4.4.

4.5.

---

5. What major strengths did you/do you identify in your graduate professors (be specific-use concrete examples)? DO NOT NAME A SPECIFIC PROFESSOR(S).

5.1.

5.2.

5.3.

5.4.

5.5.

---

6. What major weaknesses did you/do you identify in your graduate professors (be specific-use concrete examples)? DO NOT NAME A SPECIFIC PROFESSOR(S).

6.1.

6.2.

6.3.

6.4.

6.5.

---

7. Were you professionally experienced/employed, prior to beginning graduate school, in the field(s) in which you sought and/or are seeking your graduate degree(s)?

7.1. Yes___No___

7.1.1. If experienced/employeed(prior) do you believe this experience improved your graduate school experience/program? Yes___No___
Comments:

7.2. Job Title_____

7.3. Number of years employed in this job___

General Comments:

Appendix C

EDAD 524-Historical and Philosophical Foundations of Higher Education

The Professoriate

(Survey Instrument-Faculty)

Female___Male___
Degree:Ph.D.___or Ed.D.___Rank_____
College/University_____School/Department_____
#of Years Higher Education Teaching Experience____
Area(s) of Teaching Specialty_____
Area(s) of Research Specialty_____
Directions: Reflect upon either your past and/or present experiences as a college/university faculty member when answering the following questions. The **Comment Section** is for you to provide this researcher any pertinent data that you believe would aid this research study in better defining the **Professoriate** past, present, and emerging. Thank you for your reflective responses.

_____

1. What are the major teaching and research responsibilities of a professor?

1.1.

1.2.

1.3.

1.4.

1.5.

---

2. What are the major advisement and public service responsibilities of a professor?

2.1.

2.2.

2.3.

2.4.

2.5.

---

3. What other roles should a professor take to assist undergraduate and graduate students progress towards their degrees?

3.1.

3.2.

3.3.

3.4.

3.5.

---

4. How do you see the role and scope of college/university education changing in the society of the late 1990's and as we enter the 21st century?

4.1.

4.2.

4.3.

4.4.

4.5.

---

5. How do you see the role of the professor changing given these institutional changes?

5.1.

5.2.

5.3.

5.4.

5.5.

---

6. What major strengths do you identify in your undergraduate and graduate students (please provide some specific examples)?

6.1.

6.2.

6.3.

6.4.

6.5.

---

7. What major weaknesses do you identify in your undergraduate and graduate students (please provide some specific examples)?

7.1.

7.2.

7.3.

7.4.

7.5.

General Comments: